Westbrook, Frank Fairchild

President, University of British Columbia

1917-1918 (pt 1)

Wesbrook, Frank Fairchild [President, University of British Columbia] 1917-1918 (041)

December 21st., 1917

President F. F. Wesbrook,

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VANCOUVER BC DEC 18-19-17

SIR ROBT A FAULKNER

PRESS UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO TORONTO

IF SELECTIVE CONSCRIPTION IS TO MEAN THE MOST INTELLIGENT USE OF CANADIANS SHOULD NOT UNIVERSITIES AGAIN BE BUILT UP IN ORDER TO MAKE GOOD THE THREE YEARS LOSS OF TRAINED EXPERTS STOP SHOULD NOT CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES MAKE SOME COMMON RECOMMENDATION AS A GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT STOP WHAT STEPS DO YOU TAKE IN REGARD TO EXEMPTION OF APPLIED SCIENCE STUDENTS SCIENCE STUDENTS IN ART AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS AND ART STUDENTS IN THEIR FINAL YEAR ALSO IN REGARDS TO FACULTY STOP WE WISH TO FALL INTO LINE STOP BUT WE ARE LOSING LESS THAN TEN STUDENTS ON ACCOUNT OF CONSCRIPTION BUT A NUMBER BELOW CONSCRIPTION AGE ARE ENLISTING FROM TIME TO TIME STOP SHOULD NOT ENLISTMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BE STOPPED SINCE CONSCRIPTION HAS GONE INTO EFFECT

F S WESBROOK.

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December 21st., 1917

President F. F. Westbrook,

University of British Columbia.

Dear President Westbrook:

I am convinced that we as Universities should not interfere directly with enlistment on the part of our students, though in general terms we should urge all those who are under the conscription age to keep on at their work, and complete as much of it as possible. To this end I got the Premier, Sir William Pearce, to issue a proclamation to the schools, a copy of which I am enclosing. This proclamation we have also placed in all our buildings. The case of the medical students is covered by the militia regulations. With regard to the Applied Science students Dr. Macallum, I believe, is taking action and has asked that Electrical Engineering students as well as chemical engineering students should be exempted from compulsory service. We have had nearly all our chemical and electrical engineering students engaged on munition or other war work. Those in the fourth year will I think be allowed to finish their course. As with you so with us the number of our students who are liable to military service is not very large. We cannot take action with regard to Agricultural students because they are not under our supervision. I have a feeling that the Universities are not the bodies to ask for exemption. The Ontario Medical Council has placed the matter before the military authorities, and we have co-operated with them. At the same time

I have written to the Overseas Minister of Militia asking that students at the front should be given the same privileges as those at home. I thought also that Macallum as Chairman of the Honorary Advisory Committee might be expected to have in mind the conditions of the country at large and would be the best authority to ask for the exemption of the Applied Science students.

Wishing you the compliments of the season, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

May 15th, 1918.

F. F. Wesbrook, LL. D., etc. etc.

President,

The University of B. C.,

Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Dr. Wesbrook:-

As you may be aware, Mr. A. L. Marshall, a graduate of the University of British Columbia from the department of Chemistry, was appointed Assistant in Chemistry in the University of Toronto on April 20th last. I hear that since his appointment Mr. Marshall has been called for military service; and - as we are at our wits' end to find anyone to take his place - I venture to ask you to lay the following statement of our situation here before the proper authorities in Vancouver.

(1) Our staff in chemistry, besides training a limited number of men to follow that science as a profession, gives lecture and laboratory instruction to all students of Medicine, Veterinary Science, Engineering, and Forestry as an integral part of their University training. We feel that in furnishing this training, we are doing work of the greatest importance for the army; over ninety per cent of our graduates in Medicine since the war began, more than two hundred Veterinary graduates, and nearly all the Engineers and Foresters having joined the army in positions where their very necessary special training can be used to the best advantage.

(2) All the graduates from the "special" departments of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering since 1914, and a large number of undergraduates (more than eighty in all) are now working in the chemical laboratories of the Imperial Munitions Board, or in those of plants for the production of explosives, acetone, nickel, molybdenum, or other substances which are used for and are essential to the prosecution of the war.

(3) Within the last three weeks letters have been addressed to the University by the Imperial Munitions Board, Ottawa, the British Chemical Co., Trenton, British Acetones, Toronto, Canadian Explosives Ltd., Montreal, the British Explosives works at Nobel, and the Trinitro Plant, Nobel, asking to be supplied with more trained Chemists for their laboratories; and the Director of Explosives, Imperial Munitions Board, Ottawa, writes (under the date April 30, 1918):-

> "Your men, with their technical training, and their realization of the importance of the work they are doing, have been of very great assistance to us and I sincerely hope that the Militia Department will realize, in spite of the urgent call for man power, the value of in no way interfering with the training of young Chemists in this country, for there is no doubt that as long as the war lasts it will be necessary for us to call upon the Universities for assistance."

(4) The Staff in Chemistry has been very seriously depleted by the war. Two of the Professors of Chemistry are absent on military duty, and a third is at Washington, ~~is~~ acting as technical adviser to the British Mission there. The number of Assistants has been reduced, and we have had the greatest difficulty in

securing even this reduced number of qualified men. At present, two of the Assistants in Chemistry are graduates of United States Universities, who have been granted temporary exemption by their Local Boards because of the work they are doing here; one is from New Brunswick; and another (Mr. Marshall) is from British Columbia. If he fails us, we do not know where to look for a substitute; and I do not see how the staff can manage to carry on at all if still further reduced in numbers.

(5) It has been the practice hitherto in this Military District, for our graduates in chemistry to enlist, and then to be given leave of absence without pay for so long as they may continue to work in government controlled munitions plants, under the Imperial Munitions Board, or as instructors in chemistry in the University. I hope that this policy may commend itself to the military authorities in Vancouver, and that - in view of the situation set forth in this letter - Mr. Marshall may be given leave of absence, under proper safeguards, so that his services may be available to us in this University.

Yours very truly,